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# Inside APHIS

Vol. 14 No. 4

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## U.S. Apples Enter China in Historic Breakthrough

Apples from the State of Washington went to China at the end of June, marking the first time that any American fruit or vegetable has been officially allowed into the country.

Agriculture Secretary Mike Espy traveled to Washington on June 29 to commemorate the first shipment to leave the State. Espy, who visited China last fall, has been intimately involved in the effort to increase American farm income by opening the Chinese market for U.S. agricultural products.

"This successful outcome never could have happened without everyone involved dedicating a lot of time and effort to the process," says Mike Shannon, PPQ's Assistant Director for Operational Support. He and PPQ Deputy Administrator Glen Lee made up the APHIS part of the team in China this past June.

### Team USDA

"It was a classic example of 'Team USDA' in action," continues Shannon. "In addition to the Secretary himself, the State, the industry, the Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS), the Agricultural Research Service (ARS), and IS and PPQ in APHIS—all were part of this team."

Chinese plant quarantine officials are primarily concerned about the codling moth and the Medfly. ARS scientists provided the scientific support necessary to satisfy the Chinese that the apples would not carry these and other pests. The intensive preparations and personal attention by the FAS agricultural counselor in China facilitated meetings and follow-up discussions.

In this country, PPQ and Washington State employees managed the export program, approving participating orchards, and designing packaging facilities. The apple industry developed the Chinese market and was intimately involved in setting up the necessary protocols and assuring industry adherence to the conditions for export. PPQ and IS employees coordinated and negotiated procedures for export with involved parties.

### December Agreement

Although the general agreement on conditions for the exportation was reached last December, agreement on the many details for the actual entry of Washington apples into China wasn't reached until last month.

"The role of APHIS in developing and negotiating solutions that overcome phytosanitary barriers to markets is the equivalent of a broker," explains Shannon. "Without the efforts of Federal, State, and private-sector teammates, however, we could not succeed. It is exactly this team approach that led to the market-access agreement."

A long-term result of this agreement is the significant opportunities it creates for further export agreements. China contains nearly 20 percent of the world's population. The personal relationships and negotiation platform established in China last June will facilitate resolution of phytosanitary barriers to a wide range of U.S. agricultural products in the future! ♦



PHOTO BY PRESTON SPENCER

Secretary of Agriculture Mike Espy signs the first box of American apples being shipped to China.

# Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor:

Dr. P. R. Henry, an institution in VS, retired recently, and in June, family, friends, and colleagues gathered at the Colorado VS office to honor him. Henry's 34-year career with the Government included military action in the South Pacific in World War II, an assignment in Mexico to eradicate foot-and-mouth disease in the 1940's and leadership roles in emergency task forces combating hog cholera in North Carolina and Virginia, Venezuelan equine encephalitis in Texas, and exotic Newcastle disease in California.

In 1975 Henry assumed responsibility for VS operations in Colorado. In cooperation with his State animal health counterparts, Henry has worked to eradicate a number of animal diseases in Colorado over the past 19 years. Twenty years ago, Colorado had dozens of brucellosis-infected cattle herds. Today, the State has no infected herds and will soon qualify for "Free" status.

Dr. Henry's leadership in VS and his willingness to serve as a mentor

for many individuals in our organization has had an immeasurable impact on animal health and American agriculture.

R. M. Nervig  
Director,  
VS Western Regional Office

Dear Editor:

We sadly report the death of G. Gregor Rohwer on June 8, 1994.

During the 1960's and '70's Rohwer and his counterparts from Mexico and Canada developed and advanced concepts that ended in the formation of the North American Plant Protection Organization. In keeping with his strong beliefs in the need for regional and global approaches to plant protection, Mr. Rohwer was Executive Secretary of NAPPO from 1987 to 1994. He retired from APHIS in January 1988 but continued working on international agricultural issues and remained active with NAPPO until his death.

Mr. Rohwer first joined USDA in 1940. He worked in a number of field positions until 1963 when he

moved the headquarters in Hyattsville MD. His field accomplishments included directing eradication of Medfly from Florida in 1956. His headquarters experience included director of the Pesticides Regulation Division (now EPA), the APHIS Operations Review Staff, and PPQ's National Program Planning Staff. In 1981, he was appointed PPQ Assistant Deputy Administrator, initially working on eradication of the Medfly from California. He then became the Deputy Administrator for International Programs in PPQ.

During his lifetime he wrote articles for a number of publications. NAPPO and the Organismo Internacional Regional de Sanidad Agropecuaria (OIRSA) will soon publish a manuscript on the roles of regional plant protection organizations. Mr. Rohwer was the senior author of that manuscript.

Mr. Rohwer's energetic and eager participation in plant protection matters will be sorely missed.

Scot Campbell  
Director,  
IS Operational Support

## Beagle Brigade Celebrates Earth Day



APHIS PHOTO BY LAURIE SMITH

Pat Jensen, Acting Assistant Secretary for Marketing and Inspection Services, and the always alert Jackpot posed for photos during a pause in Earth Day festivities in the USDA cafeteria this past spring. Jackpot and his partner, PPQ officer Frank Tully, demonstrated Jackpot's sniffing skills for the many USDA employees and invited guests.

## Inside APHIS

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# Telling Tourists and Others About Public Service

By Cindy Eck and Robin Porter, Public Affairs, LPA

Hundreds of people stopped by the APHIS booth during Public Service Recognition Week held on the National Mall in Washington, DC, this past May. They stopped to inquire about everything from biotechnology to wildlife. A delegation of employees staffed the booth, distributing fact sheets and brochures, showing videos about the ADC program and PPQ's Beagle Brigade, and answering innumerable questions from students, tourists, and other Federal employees.

On Friday, May 6, the main attraction was Dulles airport's beagle brigade team—PPQ officer Frank Tully and Jackpot. To the delight of many school children and tourists, Jackpot repeatedly demonstrated his sniffer skills by finding illegal fruit and meats in a lineup of suitcases.

"I thought the event helped make the public more aware of the various Federal and municipal agencies," said Martin Mendoza, an ADC staff officer in Hyattsville, MD, who worked at the booth.

Fellow staff officer and 17-year Government veteran Sam Crowe spent a day at ADC's Living With Wildlife exhibit. Crowe said most of his interaction was with curious tourists.

"The people who were most interested in APHIS were visiting from out of town and appeared to be investigating the sights and sounds of Washington," Crowe said, adding that most of the wildlife-related questions focused on damage to private property.

Steve Smith, an animal care technician with REAC, said he found it very gratifying to be part of the team effort of APHIS employees who present our programs to the public.

Arnold Foudin, director of biotechnology permits in BBEP, echoed Smith's thoughts: "I found myself in the position of talking about APHIS' role within team USDA in addition to describing field testing of genetically engineered plants."

During the week-long event, the APHIS delegation received more than

50 requests for additional information about the Agency.

The salute to public service was sponsored by the President's Council on Management Improvement and Public Employees Roundtable. The event featured exhibits from throughout Government, including the Department of Commerce, the Department of Defense, the Department of Housing and Urban Development, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the Department of Health and Human Services.



APHIS PHOTO BY LAURIE SMITH

Steve Smith, REAC, (right) talks to visitors during Public Service Recognition Week.

# Grasshoppers in Chocolate are fare as Project Winds Down

By Mike Sampson, GHIPM Project, PPQ

Last spring, about 80 representatives and scientists from Federal and State agencies met in Boise, ID, for the last annual meeting of PPQ's Grasshopper Integrated Pest Management (GHIPM) Project.

The meeting opened with a grasshopper social featuring laboratory-raised 'hoppers supplied by the Rangeland Insect Laboratory, an Agricultural Research Service facility in Bozeman, MT. The head chef at the hotel in Boise prepared stir-fry grasshoppers, grasshoppers tempura, and chocolate-covered grasshoppers. Most of those

attending the annual meeting sampled the entomological cuisine, but some diehards said they would rather "treat than eat" the 'hoppers.

Preparing grasshoppers to tempt the palate helped draw attention to the grasshopper problem, especially from the local and regional media. A television station in Albuquerque, NM, even aired a short film feature about cooking and eating grasshoppers as a result of covering the meeting. However, Project Director Gary Cunningham thought the meeting was successful for other reasons.

"Since 1987 we have conducted research to find better and more environmentally responsible ways to manage grasshoppers on rangeland, says Cunningham. "Now we are drawing together all of that research into a final product, the GHIPM User Handbook. The handbook will be the primary printed technology-transfer tool from the project."

Designed for Federal and State land managers, Extension personnel, farmers and ranchers, and others interested in grasshopper

(See GRASSHOPPERS on page 4)

# Headquarters Lightens up by Sweeping Offices Clean

By Linda Mudd, MSD, M&B

With the move to Riverdale, MD, looming ever closer, headquarters offices are starting to mobilize Operation Clean Sweep. Essential records will have to go to the new home, of course. But what about the odds and ends that pile up in all human environments, even in the most well-managed offices? These have to be sifted through, stored, or discarded, and there is a method to approaching this apparent chaos.

The Management Services Division of M&B designed Operation Clean Sweep to pare down the contents of 1,000 existing file cabinets to fit into 350 cabinets in the new building. MSD managers have already given training to over 300 employees. In the training employees learn about the disposition schedules in their APHIS Records Management Handbook. These schedules, organized by major program area, tell how long each type of record must be saved and how to use alternative storage sites, such as the Federal Records Center (those with a disposal date) and the National Archives (permanent records to be kept forever).

As proof that the operation is working, offices have reported over 1186 cubic feet of material either disposed of or transferred to the Federal Records Center.

Many offices have held Clean-



APHIS PHOTO BY LAURIE SMITH

**IS' Operational Support staff members go down on the floor in sweep-clean operations this past spring. Sorting through records (left to right) are Doug Barnett, Rod Coan, and Mary Neal.**

sweep days. VS and IS hold Clean Sweep once a month with great success. To date, VS has either disposed of or transferred to the Records Center over 200 cubic feet of records. International Services has disposed of 250 cubic feet.

Even though they may not be moving, field offices can implement their own Clean-sweep campaigns. PPG's Southeastern Region recently

held an administrative support workshop in Atlanta, GA. One of the main concerns of employees at this meeting was records management. Training in records management is available for the regional offices as well as headquarters. To get more information on the Clean-sweep campaign, contact me or Cathy McDuffie in MSD at 301-436-7705. ♦

## GRASSHOPPERS from page 3

management on rangeland, the User Handbook should be available early in 1995, after the GHIPM Project officially closes out in September 1994, Cunningham adds.

The GHIPM Project began in Boise and has drawn eight Federal agencies, 10 universities, State departments of agriculture, private industry, and public interest groups into a 9-year effort to improve and refine grasshopper management techniques. Other major achieve-

ments during the life of the project include the development of a computer-based program to help managers make decisions for grasshopper control programs, two grasshopper identification guides, environmental data showing the effects of treatment programs on nontarget organisms, and research on alternative control measures. Technology transfer will continue after the project officially closes.

With the end of the Project approaching, Cunningham has

already been assigned new duties. This month he reports to Hyattsville, MD, as the new National Coordinator of the Boll Weevil Eradication Program. GHIPM Project staff in Boise will continue to implement technology transfer in the western rangeland States, close out the project, perhaps feasting on a final meal of 'hoppers before saying goodbye. ♦

# Western Cotton Pest Gets Plush New Home in Phoenix

By Larry Hawkins, Public Affairs, LPA

Under a clear blue sky with the thermometer indicating a moderate 82 degrees, it's a perfect day in May for a pink bollworm. The scene, however, is not a California cotton field but the new Pink Bollworm Rearing Facility a few hundred miles away in Phoenix, AZ.

People representing the cotton industry and county, State, and Federal agencies gathered to dedicate the new facility and to get a first look at the latest refinements in sterile-insect rearing technology.

Acquisition, construction, and funding for the new \$10.2 million facility came from the cooperative efforts of APHIS, the California Department of Food and Agriculture, and cotton growers. A \$2.00 assessment on each bale of cotton ginned in California generates industry funds to finance the State portion of the cooperative pink bollworm program.

## Big Improvement

"The new facility is just plain outstanding," says PPQ facility director Fred Stewart. "When fully operating, this facility will greatly reduce labor and make the rearing process more efficient."

Pioneer work on mass rearing techniques for pink bollworm began in the mid 1950's in Brownsville, TX. In 1968, scientists conceived and initiated a program to combat the destructive cotton pest. They used massive releases of sterile pink bollworm moths to disrupt the reproductive cycle of the pest and eradicate it. Operating from a 3,200 square foot building and 11 mobile trailers in 1970, the program slowly increased production from a low of about 260,000 moths per day in 1970 to about 5.2 million sterile moths daily during the 1993 season.

Researchers on the APHIS Methods Development staff concluded several years ago that eradication of pink bollworm could be achieved using early crop termination, pheromone rope, and sterile moth release. However, as many as 15 million sterile moths are needed to augment the other tools. The new facility, with its massive humidity and temperature incubation and collection rooms, huge coolers, and high-volume automated kitchen makes such a program feasible.



APHIS PHOTO BY BILL ABEL

Jim Reynolds, PPQ's Western Regional Director, speaks to the group at the dedication of the pink bollworm facility.

## Old and New

"Right now, we have one foot in the old facility, a mile down the road, and the other foot in the new one," Stewart says. "It's kind of confusing." The diet is still made in the old kitchen using precisely measured amounts of solids, liquids, and food supplements blended together. Then the pink bollworm moth eggs are added and the combination is sealed in a paper and plastic package ready for the incubation room.

Moth collection is now happening in the new facility using fiber optics to transmit ultraviolet light. "We have increased our collection rate by three percent during the two months we have been using the new place," says Stewart.

The new process will allow for high-volume production. At every step of the rearing process, special sanitation procedures will protect the insects from contamination or infection. The atmosphere at the facility more closely resembles a hospital than a cotton field. Adult pink bollworm moths collected in the last stage of the life cycle and chilled to immobilize them are then sterilized by irradiation, packed,

and transported to cotton-growing areas in California. The following day, the sterile moths are released at selected cotton farms where native pink bollworms have been trapped.

## Blowing Moths

Now, pink bollworm moths from the Imperial Valley and other infested valleys are blown across the mountains to the San Joaquin Valley about 100 miles away. Growers want to prevent the pink bollworm from becoming established in the San Joaquin Valley, where additional pest-control measures could cost \$85.00 per acre. Based on the current assessment, the pink bollworm sterile moth program is a bargain at \$5.00 per acre.

"It takes time to get our new machinery on line and to get the 80 percent humidity required for egg production," remarks Stewart. "When we are able to get the new facility fully operational—in several months—we will have moved from a soup-kitchen technology to a highly refined insect production factory. Then the program can really move forward." ♦

# ADC Focus Groups Put People First

By Ken Waters, Evaluation Services, PPD

One of the main tenets of the reinvention effort is "putting people first." The managers of some APHIS programs, such as ADC, wanted to "reinvent" their programs and "put people first" even before reinvention became widespread.

Putting people first can be hard, though, when people have strong and differing views about Government programs. Listening to different views and trying to use that information to make positive changes to a program can be a challenge. I discovered this first hand last September while working for the managers of the ADC program.

The ADC program exists to help people solve problems with wildlife. ADC employees deal with three main groups of people who have differing views about the program: Clients who receive service, wildlife managers who cooperate with ADC, and animal-interest groups who oppose some of the tools and methods ADC uses.

ADC Deputy Administrator Bobby Acord asked PPD's Evaluation Services staff to listen to the views of these three groups. To do this, we invited wildlife managers and client representatives to participate in three focus-group interviews and animal-interest groups to participate in three. Four sessions were held in Washington, DC, and two were held in Salt Lake City, UT.

The experiences I had in Salt Lake City show what happens when you make a concerted effort to listen to differing views. The first session on September 14, 1993, was with animal-interest groups. The second session, two days later, was with both wildlife managers and client representatives.

Things began to happen almost the minute we arrived at our hotel in Salt Lake City. Exhausted, I put my bags in my room, sat down, and found the TV's remote. I was flipping through the channels when I caught the end of a local news report: "Two Agriculture officials were in town to look at a controversial program dealing with wildlife...." Continuing to flip through the channels, I was halfway through a Dwight Yoakum video on country music television when I realized that one of the "officials"

was me. This was the first time I had "made the news" in my 14 years as an APHIS employee. The next day was sure to be interesting.

As the session began, participants told us that no one had really listened to them in the past, and they wondered if this session would really be any different. One participant pointedly told us that we had better be there to learn how to "involve" animal-interest groups, not learn how to "handle" them.

After numerous reassurances

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**"Putting people first can be hard . . . when people have strong and differing views about Government programs."**

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*Ken Waters*

that we were there to listen, the group began to tell us what messages they wanted us to carry back to Washington. Many animal-interest groups were so opposed to even the idea of an animal damage control program that they only wanted the program discontinued.

Other attendees suggested ways ADC or its replacement could be improved. First and foremost, they wanted a program that was open and accessible. They wanted to be involved in the direction of the program, and they wanted easy access to information from and about the program. Many thought ADC's money would be better spent on researching non-lethal methods of controlling wildlife. Actually, for the last 2 years, ADC has devoted about 60 percent of its research budget to development of non-lethal methods.

The Thursday participants (wildlife managers and clients) had concerns too. Some participants worried that we were biased toward the animal-interest groups and that we would not give proper weight to their concerns. We reassured them that we were there to listen to what everyone had to say and report it back to ADC managers.

When the participants felt comfortable that we would be

objective, they began to tell us what messages they wanted us to carry back. The wildlife managers perceived that ADC needed to improve its communication with the press and the public." They pointed out that ADC should promote its positive accomplishments such as protecting human health and safety and preserving endangered species. Many suggested that ADC build new coalitions, looking for common ground with traditional adversaries while preserving old constituents.

Both of these groups also wanted ADC to continue to emphasize research, but they wanted more focus on effective, socially acceptable methods. Client representatives cautioned that money should not be taken from control activities and given to research. A recent client survey of ADC programs showed a 91-percent satisfaction level with ADC services. One representative in the focus group who had to deal with a roost of millions of birds pointed out that ADC was "there when I needed them."

When we finished the two focus groups in Salt Lake City and the four in Washington, DC, we worked with ADC managers to set the best direction for the program. Being forward thinking, ADC managers used the opportunity to "put people first" in the tough reality of a controversial Government program. This year they launched a campaign to tell the public about its role in living with wildlife. They have begun to move away from the role of simply providing service. Instead, ADC is "reinventing" itself into the role of Federal leader and catalyst for initiating collaborative responses to a broad array of wildlife problems. ♦

*Editor's Note: Ken Waters is now on a detail to the Office of the Deputy Secretary as part of a Customer Service Team organized to carry out Executive Order 12862, Setting Customer Service Standards. The opportunity for the detail came as a result of Water's work with the ADC focus groups.*

# North Carolina PPQ Treats Land for Asian Gypsy Moth

By Ed Curlett, Public Affairs, LPA

Aerial spray operations went off without a hitch this year at the Cooperative Asian Gypsy Moth Eradication Project near Wilmington, NC.

"Excellent weather conditions played a large part in our fast completion time," says Dan Wall, spray coordinator with the North Carolina Department of Agriculture (NCDA). "There were only 5 days in which we were scheduled to spray but couldn't between April 8 and April 27."

About 134,000 acres were sprayed twice with *Bacillus thuringiensis* (Bt), a naturally occurring bacterium that disrupts the digestive systems of caterpillars that ingest the leaves. An aerial spray company made the Bt applications. APHIS aircraft sprayed another 6,000 acres twice with Gypchek, a virus that affects only gypsy moths.

## Large Operation

"I feel that the operation ran smoothly even though it was the largest I have ever been involved with," Wall continues. The total number of acres sprayed is impressive. For the entire project, 294,274 acres were treated. The most acres treated in one day were 42,024.

The infestation near Wilmington was discovered at the Sunny Point Military Ocean Terminal in July 1993. Moths flying from a ship carrying infested cargo containers from Germany introduced the pest.

Asian gypsy moth was not known to occur in Europe until this introduction was traced there. These dangerous pests of trees will eat more than 400 different kinds of trees and shrubs.

The spraying part of the eradication effort usually began at first light and continued until about 9 a.m. when the prevailing winds reached 8 miles per hour. Operations usually resumed when the winds subsided in the late afternoon to early evening.

## No Chemicals

"Public environmental and safety concerns were minimal because Bt is not a chemical; it occurs naturally in the soil," says Mike South, PPQ's North Carolina plant health director. South says that Bt affects



PHOTO BY LARRY HAWKINS

Helicopters like this one were used to spray environmentally sensitive areas with Gypchek for an infestation of Asian gypsy moth near Wilmington, NC, this past spring.

only caterpillars, breaks down in the soil, and is commonly used by home gardeners. It is not harmful to humans.

"In environmentally sensitive areas, we used Gypchek, which alleviated environmental concerns because it affects only gypsy moths," South says. Gypchek was used on 21 sites; the amount needed used up the national supply. Now that spray operations are complete, trapping has begun.

## Trapping

"Post-treatment trapping operations will determine the efficacy of the treatments," says Terry McGovern, a PPQ operations officer. "About 30,000 traps are being set at a density of 25 traps per square mile to detect and delimit any Asian gypsy moths that may have survived the treatment phase of the eradication project," McGovern says.

Full-time employees of PPQ and NCDA are supervising a temporary work force of about 75 trappers. Two years of negative survey will be required before eradication can be declared.

Why have PPQ and North Carolina put so much effort into eradicating this pest? Asian gypsy

moth caterpillars are capable of defoliating entire forests and can cause serious deterioration of trees and shrubs.

## Two Moth Varieties

The Asian gypsy moth is similar to the European gypsy moth that is found in the Northeastern United States and Southeastern Canada. However, unlike the flightless females of the long established gypsy moth, female Asian gypsy moths are active fliers. Their ability to fly long distances (up to 20 miles) makes it possible for this variety to quickly infest and spread throughout the United States.

By contrast, the European gypsy moth has taken more than 120 years (since 1869) to spread throughout the Northeast. In the East, gypsy moths defoliate an average of about 4 million acres each year, causing millions of dollars' worth of damage. ♦

# Employees Take Their Daughters to Work . . . and Their Sons, Too

To show the daughters and sons of employees what their parents do when they leave their homes to go to work each day, an Agency-wide headquarters committee organized a Take-Your-Daughter-to-Work Day this past spring. Field offices planned their own regional and area events, and some work units also had daughters at the work place.

Organized 2 years ago by MS. Magazine to expand career horizons for girls, Take-Your-Daughter-to-Work Day was a big hit in APHIS this past year.

Employees at headquarters staffed displays, conducted tours, and demonstrated their expertise to over 130 participating daughters and sons. In the field, PPQ employees worked cooperatively with other agencies and groups. For example, Charles Emery, Officer in Charge at Rouses Point, NY, accepted an invitation by U.S. Customs to speak to nine daughters about science at the U.S. Customs cargo center at Champlain, NY. Emery showed them a collection of insects intercepted in baggage and food.

Participation for the event at headquarters this year was organized by Rick Certo, M&B; Elaine Gilbert, R&D; Mary Ellen Keyes, R&D; Sharon Beaner, M&B; Carmen Queen-Hines, M&B; Robin Cecil, PPQ; Andrea Elston, M&B; Phuong Calloway, ADC; Pat Roberts, ADC; and Stosh Comisiak, counselor for the Employee Assistance Program. At its first meeting, the committee broadened the occasion to include sons as well because employees wanted their sons to see what they do as well as their daughters.

Elated that they were missing school but interested in the opportunity to check out their parents, the sons and daughters of headquarters' employees—and also teenagers in the mentor program—got to exchange comments and interests with employees they didn't know who were attending the opening event. One exchange went like this:

"I'm Aaron Best. I'm in the third grade. I'm here with my mom. She's Palenta Best, with PPQ. She's a computer specialist. I know a lot about computers. I get straight A's in science, but I hate math. What do you do?"

Following the icebreaker, Acting Administrator Lonnie King, who brought his own daughter Meghan to the event, addressed the group.

"Why is it a good idea to be here and miss school?" King asked. "It's never too early to think about what you'll do in life. If you've ever wondered why adults ask kids what they're going to do when they grow up, it's because the adults are looking for ideas," he commented.

King pointed out similarities to work and school: "Here, we're always trying to pass to the next grade, too. We also have allowances, but we



call them budgets. We have recess; we call it a coffee break. We learn, and train, and become better educated. At work, as at school, learning doesn't stop."

Learning went on all day as the daughters and sons saw films about the agency mission, listened to career presentations by wildlife biologists, veterinarians, and regulatory officials, and watched a beagle team demonstrate how it

detects illegal items in passenger baggage.

There were bug displays, an ear-tagging demonstration, a multimedia center to explore, animals to touch. The day at headquarters ended with parents and children making their own sundaes in a party atmosphere.

In the PPQ Regional Office at Moorestown, NJ, 11 daughters were welcomed by Sonia Dabulis,

Regional Operations Support Team member, and an FSIS employee. PPQ officer Tom Chanelli explained the PPQ mission and showed them the video on the beagle brigade. Then the girls car-

pooled to Philadelphia International Airport where they visited the airport tower, met air controllers, and boarded an airplane. Next they met Immigration and Naturalization officers, U.S. Customs officers, and saw Canine Officer Joann Johnson demonstrate her dog's sniffing power. They returned to Moorestown at the end of the day with a good exposure to at least seven possible nontraditional careers in Government.

Assistant Officer in Charge Mary Benzie at John F. Kennedy (JFK) International Airport reported that three daughters of JFK employees began the day with a visit to the JFK weather station, a peek at the British Airways terminals, the Concorde Aircraft, the Beagle Brigade training center, and the JFK flight arrivals tower. Lunching with both PPQ officers and support staff, the girls had a chance to quiz them about their jobs. Later in the day, PPQ supervisor Elizabeth Pastrana showed them slides of her foreign temporary duty assignments and adventures in Europe, Ecuador, Japan, and Chile.

"By day's end," says Benzie, "the girls had an understanding of airport operations, career opportunities in science, and an appreciation for their parents' jobs."

1 Jovan Dickson, nephew to Sharon Beaner, M&B, tells Charlotte Travieso, M&B, that Acting Administrator Lonnie King and he share an interest in football.

2 Sara Kaman, VS, shows Don Stevenson (nephew of Carolyn Gethers, R&D) where to fasten an ear tag on Vera the pig, a VS exhibit.

3 Dana DeWesse, entomologist at PDC, Frederick, boosts up Bret, son of Rick Yoshimitsu, PPQ.

4 Andrea Blackburn, mentoring student of Pat Bickle, R&D, explores an iguana, one of several pets brought to Hyattsville for the day.

5 Kera Johnson, goddaughter of Gail Corbin, M&B, revives herself with a sundae at the end of the day.

6 The ADC exhibit attracts (left to right) Kay Brown, M&B, Leslie Bolton, daughter of Teresa Bolton of R&D, Buddy Brown, and Allen Bolton.

7 Rebecca Nichols, daughter of Lyndia Nichols, PPD, tries out the interactive video disk room.

8 Daughters on tour of Moorestown and environs are (left to right) Channele O'Neill, Jamie Toran, Quinn Wilson, and Lauren Voll. PPQ officer Cornelia Mueller is in the rear.

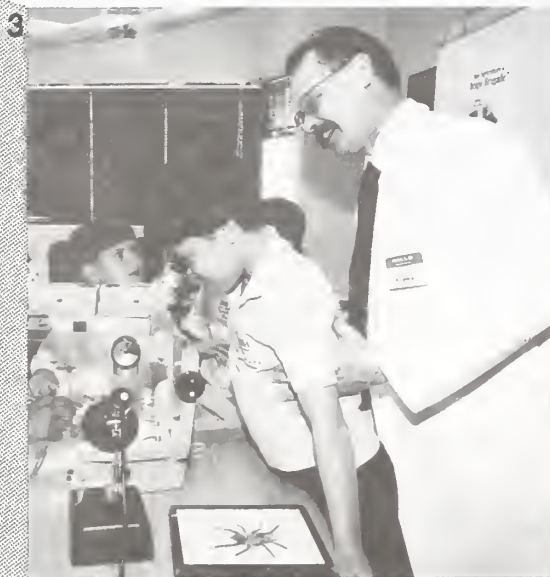
All photos by Laurie Smith. Center inset by Joanne Wilson



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# Flower Sellers Depend on PPQ for Mother's Day Bouquets

By Anna Cherry, Public Affairs, LPA

Mother's Day is one of the busiest times for flower sellers. But before the bouquets of roses, lilies, carnations, and chrysanthemums get to Mom's front door, many of the flowers have already made a trans-continental trip with a brief stop in Miami, FL. Through the port of Miami pass 342,000 tons of flowers annually. These flowers account for two-thirds of the \$13 billion in annual U.S. retail flower sales.

This year, to bring public attention to the Agency's role in making sure these flowers are healthy, Miami PPQ held a press conference about flower inspection the week before Mother's Day. Florida's Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services co-sponsored the event, joining PPQ inspectors in answering reporters' questions and telling the public about the little-known process of flower inspection. LPA's Agriculture Quarantine and Inspection campaign team set up the display area and assisted in distributing press kits and other information.

"The port of Miami receives more than 11 million boxes of flowers a year consisting of over 20 varieties in countless colors," says Vic Withee, Officer in Charge at the Miami International Airport Cargo Clearance Center.

Five news crews from Miami and the surrounding area came to film the demonstration of flower inspection at the Cargo Clearance Center. Florida State Agriculture officials and PPQ's Bill Manning and Vic



PHOTO BY LAURIE SMITH

Bill Villa, Miami PPQ officer, inspects flower stems. During peak seasons like Mother's Day, flower imports can rise by as much as 50 percent.

Withee made brief remarks and answered questions. A local flower broker donated flowers for the press conference. Reporters were then taken on a tour of a flower warehouse.

"If PPQ officers find pests or diseases while inspecting flowers, the shipment may be treated, destroyed or sent back to its country of origin," Withee said. All inspec-

tion decisions are based on the type of pest or disease found and the risk it could present to U.S. crops.

"Miami PPQ officers inspect an average of 10 to 20 million stems daily, and this can double during peak seasons like Mother's Day," Carl Davis, PPQ supervisor says. The State of Florida provided some additional inspectors during this past peak season. ♦

## Audits: Helpful Tools in the Classification Business

by Richard Sandberg, HRO, M&B

Some people tremble with fear at the mention of audits, but they are probably thinking of the interest they failed to report on their tax returns. Audits, in M&B's Human Resources Operations group, are positive things that ultimately make life easier and sometimes more remunerative for employees.

Technically called classification audits, often referred to as desk audits, they are a tool used by position classification specialists to gather information about jobs. These classifiers determine the proper title, series, and grade of a

position by comparing actual responsibilities to criteria in classification standards. By contributing to classifiers' knowledge of how jobs function, audits help assure proper classification of positions.

Classifiers get ready for audits by reviewing position descriptions and standards and preparing lots of questions. During the audit, which is an informal procedure, the classifier will discuss your responsibilities with you, then will interview your supervisor to get his or her perspective.

When classifiers need to classify jobs, they will use the audit to get detailed information about those

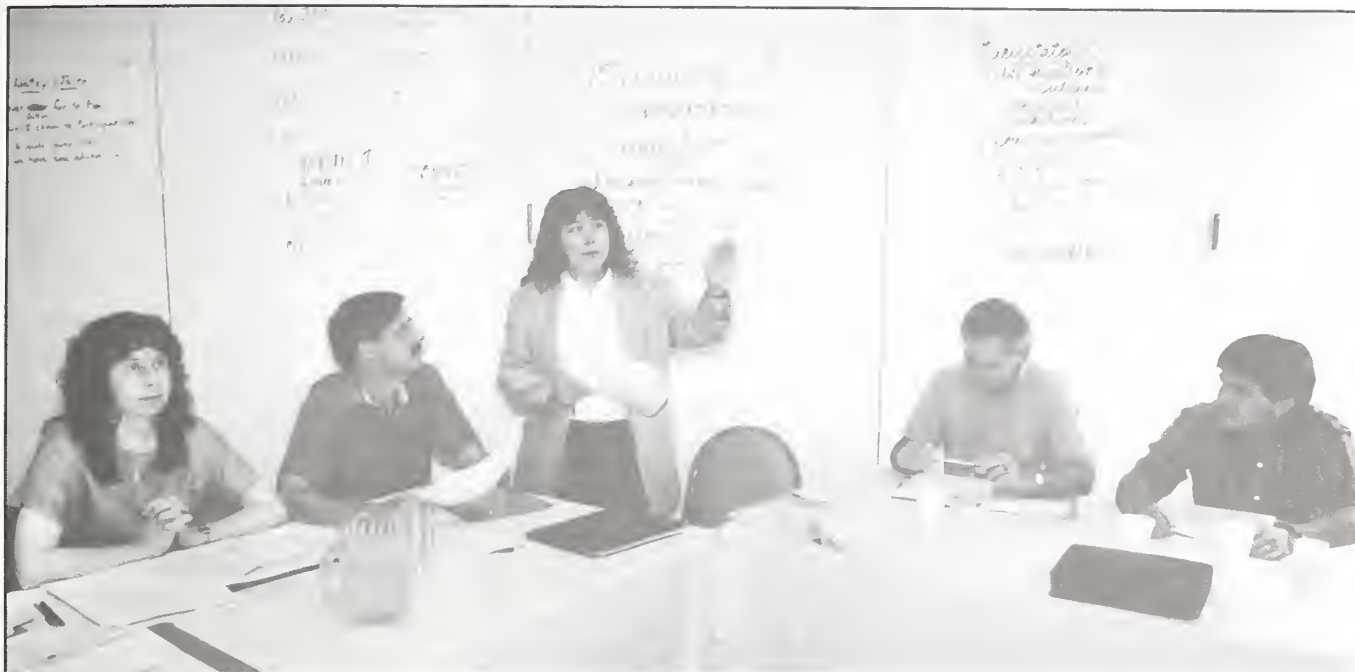
jobs. Audits help the classifier assess significant changes in positions or conduct occupation-wide reviews prompted by the issuance of new classification guidelines. Sometimes an audit will resolve various types of concerns and disagreements.

### Preparing for an Audit

If your job is to be audited, the classifier will schedule your audit in advance through your supervisor. It's a good idea to use a private office or conference room and make arrangements not to be

(See AUDITS on page 12)

## Employees Practice for Country-Wide Focus on Diversity



APHIS PHOTO BY LAURIE SMITH

Work-force diversity facilitators above practice skills they will use in focus groups this summer. Employees picked at random will participate, providing data for a draft strategic plan on work-force diversity in APHIS. From left to right: Alice Wywialowski, PPD, Hyattsville, MD; Rick Hill, BBEP, Ames, IA; Mary Negron, PPQ, Jessup, MD; Steve Poore, M&B, Minneapolis, MN; Peter Fernandez, IS, Mexico City, Mexico.

Below, Michael Hornyak, PPQ, Miami, FL, (left) plays the role of an imaginary participant with Rochelle Woods, VS, Ithaca, NY.

APHIS PHOTO BY LAURIE SMITH



## AUDITS from page 10

interrupted during the audit. If your job is not confined to an office or laboratory, the classifier will often want to accompany you on field trips or to observe activities that are representative of what you do.

Be ready to tell the classifier the approximate proportion of time you spend on each part of your job. If new duties, technologies, or new program requirements have changed your job, tell the classifier exactly what you do. For example, if you have responsibility for writing reports, have samples readily available. If your audit is to include out-of-office activities, plan an itinerary that will give the classifier an accurate picture of what your job is all about.

### Additional Tips

Remember that the classifier is visiting to learn as much as possible about your job. No one is better equipped than you to provide that information. Don't exaggerate or stretch the truth, but don't understate the importance and difficulty of your job.

Don't hesitate to volunteer information you think is important. Classifiers conducting audits always have lots of questions—but if their questions and your answers don't reveal important aspects of your job, speak up. Audits are intended

to be informal discussions; the classifier will want to hear what you have to say if it is relevant to the nature and difficulty of your job. Keep in mind that position classification focuses on positions (duties and responsibilities of a job), rather than people (personal qualifications or how well the work of the position is being done).

### Requests for Audits

To request an audit, make the request to your supervisor, who will forward it to the classification specialist. The classifier will determine whether your concerns and the classification issues should be addressed through an audit or through alternate procedures; an audit is not a *right* of employees.

The classifier will often ask about the accuracy of the current position description and may want an updated description before deciding if an audit is appropriate. Generally, an audit is more likely to occur if the request is based on specific job changes that have happened since the last review.

### Audit Results

Since classification determinations require extensive analysis, audit decisions usually take at least a few weeks. The classifier will communicate the results through supervisory channels.

Most audits confirm the validity of previous classification determinations. Sometimes, however, audits lead to changes in title, occupational series, and/or grade.

If a position is found to be functioning at a grade above its current level, the classification specialist will consult with an employment specialist and the supervisor of the audited position. They may decide to upgrade the job and promote the incumbent noncompetitively. Or they could modify work assignments so that duties are consistent with the position's grade. Sometimes audit results support the establishment of a higher-graded position that can be filled only through competitive procedures.

If a position is found to be functioning at a grade below its current classification, the classifier works with the supervisor to strengthen the job, usually by assigning the employee more difficult work. Another option is to reassign the employee to a different position at the employee's current grade level. If these efforts to resolve the situation fail, the position must be reclassified to the correct grade level as determined through the audit process.

For more information about audits, contact your Human Resources Operations specialist. ♦

## Developing Strategies for Information Management



Information Systems Planning (ISP) is a logical way to analyze how information flows and is created and used in an organization. ISP helps identify which groups need what kind of information and how information can most efficiently be used and shared. Here, ISP members work on their recommendations to the APHIS Management Team. From left to right: Tracy Bowman, PPQ; Victor Ponte, M&B; Debra Baysinger, IS; Tim Dye, VS.

Photo by Laurie Smith.

# PPD Pilots On-Camera Course for PPQ New Officers

If you've had a secret ambition to see yourself on camera, there's an opportunity for you right here in APHIS. It's in video conferencing—a communications medium that holds great promise for extroverts, would-be thespians, and busy executives alike.

R&D recently tested the capabilities of video conferencing for distance learning with four PPQ recruits enrolled in the New Officer Training. In the past, all new PPQ officers completed their required month of instruction at the Professional Development Center (PDC) in Frederick, MD.

This past May, however, four new officers stayed at their duty stations at the John F. Kennedy International Airport (JFKIA) and completed about 7 days of this instruction via video-conferencing equipment located in Hyattsville, MD.

The training consisted of domestic regulations, nursery stock regulations, and pest identification/completion of forms. An R&D instructional team at PDC made up of Mark Dagro, Dana DeWeese, Ira Gross, and Mark Quiming, taught the basic subjects. Short sessions on ethics, travel, and animal products were covered by Doris McLaughlin and Rick Certo of M&B and Ron Caffey of PPQ.

## Equipment

The equipment APHIS has purchased is simple to operate and is designed for up to 20 participants. It consists of a monitor with a camera built in on top, a computer that translates information into digital signals, and data switch units that transmit signals through telephone lines.

"Before we got into video conferencing, we researched the field," says Chris Zakarka, employee development specialist with R&D. "I'm on the Educational Technology Task Force, a group formed a year ago to reduce travel costs associated with training," Zakarka continues. "With the end of the shuttle service between Washington, DC, and Hyattsville, and the costs and time associated with travel, we need to explore the full potential for this medium."

Two other R&D Educational Technology Task Force members, Gwynn Kersh in Frederick and Van Nguyen in Hyattsville, set up the

pilot, consulting technicians and many Agency resources, including LPA and M&B.

## Team Effort

"The pilot took months of preparation to make sure all the pieces were in place," comments Kersh, "but I've been really impressed with the team effort. The teachers, the technicians, and the students—everyone cooperated to make the pilot possible."

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**"With the end of the shuttle service between Washington D.C. and Hyattsville, and the costs and time associated with travel, we need to explore the full potential of this medium."**

*Chris Zakarka*

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"We even gave the instructors training," agrees Nguyen. "In a hands-on workshop, they had the opportunity to become familiar with the preset camera positions, the monitor, and the rest of the technology."

Although a teacher with experience in video conferencing would be able to operate the controls while teaching, for the pilot a technician was on site at each location. Mike Russo, PPQ officer at JFKIA was selected as the facilitator in New York.

## JFKIA

"I'm glad Mike Russo was facilitating at JFK," says Gross, the instructor of the nursery stock course. Russo was the technician pushing the switches and buttons at JFKIA, with a preset position for each student. He also helped evaluate when the students were having problems and answered many of their questions.

Gross, an officer at JFKIA for 16 years, now teaches New Officer Training classes in Frederick, Md. He also raises cattle and enjoys rural life—a drastic change from

New York City. For the pilot, he would make the 1 1/2-hour drive each morning to Hyattsville, where the equipment and technicians awaited him. Classes generally lasted about 4 hours. In the afternoon, the PPQ students—Denny Carbuccia, Steve Manwaring, Sonia Masoud, and Ed Ostrander—returned to their posts as inspectors with the opportunity to put into practice what they had learned that morning. Thanks to the electronic medium, they could return to their families each night.

## Reactions

As other officers at JFKIA heard about the class, they would stop in to check out the new technology. Oscar Cruz, PPQ supervisory officer, was one of the drop-ins.

"I haven't seen you acting in 3 years," he joked with Gross. "I'm amazed at the system. It's wonderful," he continued after observing for a while.

Some of the new officers, however, had reservations. They missed the direct contact with the instructor and found it difficult to communicate.

"There's a 3-second delay between when one person speaks and the others hear. For the first day, we were all talking over ourselves," says Ostrander. "Also, we couldn't get our hands on the plants that Ira showed us."

"These are typical reactions coming from first-time users," says Rick McNaney, LPA assistant director and advisor for R&D on the technology. "It takes time to get over the initial intimidation of the camera and the awkwardness of compression video rather than full-motion television that we're all accustomed to."

"I think," said Russo, "that the students are concerned that the entire new officers' training may be conducted through video conferencing, but that is not the case. The nursery stock class was chosen for the pilot because it was suitable for straight presentation. We didn't lose anything in terms of learning through video conferencing."

"When we teach this part of the training in Frederick, the hours are set in concrete," says Gross. "They have a tight schedule and there is no room for varying the time spent

*(See PILOT on page 15)*

**Alarming Discovery:** Montana State agencies and the VS Western Regional Office are concerned about the discovery of tuberculosis in wild mule deer in Montana this past June. A wild mule deer shot near a Hardin, MT, area game farm last winter was tested, and the National Veterinary Services Laboratory recently confirmed its test results, according to Dean Price, Western Region's Assistant Regional Director. Tuberculosis is a serious threat to wildlife and to humans as well. VS employees have been meeting with various Montana officials, the Montana Livestock Board, the owner of the infected game farm, and other ranchers to develop a strategy for preventing the spread of the disease. Although details are not yet worked out, the strategy includes extensive monitoring of wildlife populations and inter-agency coordination.

**A Special Pizza Party:** Last April the staff of the Professional Development Center in Frederick, MD,

held a pizza party for the students and teaching staff of the Rock Creek School in appreciation for the school's assistance with various Center projects. The mentally and physically challenged students of the Rock Creek School frequently provide their time and services free of charge to assist the Professional Development staff in such projects as mass mailings and assembling instructional materials. The school regards such projects as work/study opportunities for its students.

**USDA Career Transition Resource Center:** Two centers are now open and staffed through the USDA's Office of Personnel to assist the Secretary's reorganizing initiative. At headquarters, the Center is in the mini-mall of the South Building's promenade. In the field, the Center is in Kansas City, MO. The Center's services include electronic on-line job information for positions throughout the Federal Government, software for

SF-171 and resume preparation, retirement calculations, individual and group career counseling, career enhancement workshops, and a resource library. At headquarters, call 202-720-5626. In the field, call 816-926-1177.

**Beagle Crisis at LAX:** One Wednesday in June when Los Angeles International Airport (LAX) K-9 officer Dave Rothman went to the kennel to pick up Kojak for work, the dog-gone dog was gone! After several anxious hours, the super sniffer was found and released from the Hawthorne animal shelter. It seems that a careless client at the canine commune left a closure unclosed, and our intrepid four-footed inspector began an unsupervised investigation of west Los Angeles. All's well that ends well. The careless client and his hapless hound were ordered off the canine commune, and peace was restored to Beagleburg.

## Secretarial Focus

By Linda Story, Program Manager, Operation Jumpstart

At one time or another, we have all been in uncomfortable situations because of criticism. If we can learn to give it properly and take it well, we can reduce our discomfort and even increase our own and others' chances for growth and development.

Constructive criticism provides us with feedback on what's working and what's not working. Although criticism does not always feel good and at times can be demeaning, we should attempt to receive all feedback positively. If we can understand and learn to use it to our advantage, criticism can empower us to become better people.

We tend to resist criticism because a significant part of our self-image is based on how others view us. When we find that someone sees us in a less-than-positive light, we feel chastened. It is easy to take criticism personally and to feel threatened by it. It takes an open mind to be able to listen to an opposing view or to be

told we were wrong and then to do something about it.

The following suggestions may help you to receive criticism:

1. Be aware that the criticism directed at you is "just criticism." Instead of responding by counter-attacking or becoming defensive, accept it for what it is and then move quickly to assessing its merit.
2. Assess how the criticism was delivered, the intention of the critic, and how valid you believe the criticism to be.
3. Decide what action, if any, you want to take.

Giving criticism, no matter what our roles are in the workplace, is as important as knowing how to receive it. Voicing criticism as feedback can uncover problems early and serve as the first step to solving them. Without criticism, minor problems go unresolved and often grow into major crises. Both the critic and the

person criticized can learn and grow from criticism when it is properly given. Providing others with honest feedback in the form of criticism can deepen our interpersonal relationships and can provide us, and them, with the tools necessary to improve productivity and self-esteem.

When criticizing or giving feedback, consider including the following: Be specific, realistic, and make sure the criticism is measurable; include deadlines; make sure the criticism has value; and follow up in writing.

Giving and receiving criticism involve skills that each of us needs to learn to master. By opening ourselves to criticism, we can learn to improve ourselves both personally and professionally.

This article was taken from *Giving and Receiving Criticism, Your Key to Interpersonal Success* by Pattie Hathaway. ♦

# APHIS 1994 Calendar of Events

## JULY

- 1-29 Voluntary separation incentive payment (Buy out) application window (HRD)
- 4 \*Independence Day
- 9-13 American Association of Avian Pathologists (VS)
- 9-13 American Veterinary Medical Association Annual Meeting (VS)
- 9-14 NAACP Annual National Convention (EO/CR)
- 11-13 SIT for Forest Ecosystem Management (ADC)
- 12-14 American Nursery Association (PPQ)
- 12-14 Management Information System Advisory Group Meeting (ADC)
- 18-22 Federally Employed Women Annual Conference (EO/CR)
- 18-22 PVPC Import-Export Training (R&D)
- 19-21 Top Management Team (PPQ)
- 20 Federal Women's Program meeting (M&B)
- 24-27 National Urban League Annual National Conference (EO/CR)
- 27 WIN Conference (EO/CR)
- 29 Staff Officer Training graduation (R&D)
- 31 Thrift Savings Plan Open Season Ends (HRD)

## AUGUST

- 1-5 Blacks in Government Annual National Conference (EO/CR)
- 2-4 Bird Strike Committee (ADC)
- 2-4 FAO Work Group on Pest Surveillance Standards (PPQ)
- 4-5 National Animal Welfare Education Workshop (REAC)
- 6-10 American Phytopathological Society (PPQ)
- 7-11 Ecological Society of America (PPQ)
- 8-12 National Plant Board Meeting (PPQ)
- 8-12 Management Team Meeting (REAC)
- 9-11 Women's Advisory Committee (WAC) Week (M&B)
- 14-21 International Mycologist Conference (PPQ)
- 16-25 American Fisheries Society (ADC)
- 17 Federal women's Program meeting (M&B)
- 20-25 XXI International Ornithological Congress (ADC)
- 22 Epidemiology I for VMO's training (R&D)
- 23-25 Future Search Conference (PPQ)
- 26 Women's Equality Day (EO/CR)

## SEPTEMBER

### National Hispanic Heritage Month (September 15-October 15)

- 5 \*Labor Day
- 12 Administrative Support meeting, Northern Region (VS)
- 9-14 International Association of Fish and Wildlife Annual Meeting (ADC)
- 12-16 Epidemiologist Work Conference (VS)
- 19-23 FAD Threats and Implications (R&D)
- 20-22 Top Management Team (PPQ)
- 21 Federal Women's Program meeting (M&B)
- 21-25 Wildlife Society First Annual Conference (ADC)

\*Government holiday

### PILOT from page 13

on any one area. In the pilot we had the freedom to take more or less time as we needed. With more days set into the schedule, and an open-ended end time, I felt much less pressure. I liked this part a lot."

Other than one technical incident, there were no glitches, and R&D employees seemed pleased with the pilot. Several weeks later, they followed up with an evaluation.

### Evaluations

"For the evaluation," comments Zakarka, "the students voiced some concerns that they had missed out on the chance to network with the other students by coming to the class in Frederick a week later than the others. These concerns, however did not affect their average test scores, which were equivalent to or better than the average test scores for students receiving instruction in Frederick.

"Video conferencing will never replace all classroom training or face-to-face meetings," Zakarka continues. "The findings from this pilot did indicate that training using video-conferencing technology is effective. We will continue to explore this technology for other training in APHIS."♦

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